The RECONSTRUCTIONIST

VOLUME XIV JUNE 11, 1948 SIVAN 4, 5708 No. 9

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the Reconstructionist

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AMONG OUR CONTRIBUTORS

JACK J. COHEN is a contributing editor to THE RECONSTRUCTIONIST. He has just returned from Israel.

IRVING LEVITAS is director of Education, Jewish Community Center of Kansas City, Missouri and is very active in both Jewish and general community affairs in that locality.

NOAH NARDI is psychologist and educational consultant for the Jewish Education Committee of New York. He is the author of *Education in Palestine* and *Zionism and Education in Palestine*. His articles and surveys on Jewish education have been widely published.

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Volume XIV June 11, 1948 Sivan 4, 5708 No. 9

EDITORIALS

TIMES THAT TRY THE JEWISH SOUL

THESE are tense and trying times for our people not only in Israel but in the diaspora as well. We American Jews can take neither a direct part in the fighting under present circumstances nor the initiative in political negotiation. Israel is an independent state, and we can do little more in the immediate situation than to stand aside and prayerfully await the issue. But we cannot await it with cool indifference. It is not only their war but ours too that the Israelis are fighting, both on the military and the diplomatic front. The future of the Jewish people and of Judaism is involved in the issue. Our role of passive waiting is an exasperating one. Hence our nervous tension and anxiety when things go wrong.

When Israel declared its independence, and, even more so, when our Government recognized the state of Israel, we were exultant and elated in spirit. But, since then, the old story of diplomatic intrigue has been repeated. Our Government, notwithstanding the almost universal approbation by the American people of its recognition of the Jewish state, has felt itself called upon to save the prestige of its political ally Great Britain in the Middle East. It, therefore, voted in the UN Security Council for the British proposal of a four-weeks' truce in Palestine to be enforced by sanctions. During the truce, no arms or military personnel were to be sent to Israel or any of the Arab states. (That at a time when we were expecting our Government to lift the embargo on arms to Israel!) Although both the Jews and the Arabs agreed, within the time limit set by the Security Council, to abide by the terms of the four-weeks' truce, the Arabs are again stalling. Their contention that the expiration of the time limit set for replying to the truce order was not necessarily the beginning of the truce period has been accepted by the Security Council.

The military situation has also been depressing. The small garrison defending the Yishuv in the Old City was forced to capitulate for lack of ammunition. The new city is under siege, and the road from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem is still blocked.

However, though the stiuation is depressing and our Government's acquiescence in the British proposals is disappointing, we can still look forward hopefully to eventual victory, perhaps even to an earlier victory than we anticipated. There are elements in the situation that count in our favor.

From the military angle, it should be noted that—as of the moment of writing—the Arab forces have not made any significant inroads on Israeli territory. On the contrary, all of Western Galilee and a great part of the Jordan Valley, although these regions were assigned to the Arabs under partition, are in Jewish hands.

Politically, the partition plan is still the only one before the UN and there is little likelihood of any radically different plan superseding it. The British Parliament has recently become more critical of the Government's Palestine policy because of sensitivity to the universal condemnation of that policy in America. Attlee has again promised that Great Britain would not assist in enforcing any decision not satisfactory to both Jews and Arabs, and we can be sure that no decision which does not include recognition of the state of Israel will be acceptable to the Jews. Moreover, America's attempt to save the face of Britain by working for a negotiated peace, must not be prematurely interpreted as indicating an intention to abandon partition. Though our Government has made some concessions to save Britain's face, that does not mean it is willing that America should lose face completely (though it has already suffered in prestige) by retracting its recognition of Israel's independence. It looks more as if a serious attempt is at last being made to negotiate some sort of peace which would take cognizance of the realities of the situation in respect to Palestine. Included among these realities are the demonstrated strength of the Yishuv, the sympathy accorded to it by the American public, the need for filling the vacuum resulting from the failure of Palestinian Arabs to set up their own state in the part of the land assigned to them, and the need for safeguarding British and American interests in the Middle East. The results may not be wholly to our liking but they may constitute a reasonable compromise which recognizes the two major needs of the Jewish people: the opening of Israel to mass migration of Jews, and the recognition of the state of Israel and its admission to membership in the United Nations. If during the period of the truce (assuming that it will go into effect) that can be accomplished, the truce may be the beginning of a much-needed peace.

In the meantime, let American Jews who want some release from nervous tension not seek it in futile expressions of protest. Let them seek it rather in active service to the United Jewish Appeal and the Zionist cause. Only such activity can save us, in this time of watchful waiting, from giving way to the feeling of frustration and impotence.

CONSERVATIVE JUDAISM TAKES A FORWARD STEP

AT the recent convention of the Rabbinical Assembly of America, the Conservative rabbis took a significant step forward in the development of their movement. In order to understand the implications of that step, some history may be helpful.

For almost an entire generation, the Conservative movement has occupied a vague and indefinable position between Reform and Orthodoxy. On the one hand, the Conservatives have always taken the Reform movement to task for abolishing the whole concept of law in Judaism. The *halakah* was virtually abrogated. Orthodoxy, on the other hand, came in for criticism because it refused to recognize the need for adjusting Jewish law to life. Conservatives have always believed that the secret of Jewish survival has been the gift for adaptability; and that, if

Judaism is to survive in the modern world, it must again become dynamic.

These fine theories made Conservatism very attractive to those who agreed that both Reform and Orthodoxy were inadequate theories and programs for our time. But, after a while, the friends Conservatism made began to complain that the movement was all promise and little performance. Although the Conservative groups continued to speak with much warmth about development, change, dynamism *et al,* not a single significant change had been made on an official level. True, Conservative Jews made their own changes, in accordance with their best judgment (at best), or in accordance with their whim, fancy and convenience (at worst).

The discrepancy which soon developed between what Conservative Jews were supposed to believe and what they actually did created tensions between those who demanded action, and those who contented themselves with evasion. For at least a decade, at every convention, the emotional and intellectual chasm between the two groups widened. The danger of a split within the movement became imminent.

Last year, Dr. Mordecai M. Kaplan, in an effort to solve the problem of unity within the Conservative movement, wrote an essay entitled, "Unity and Diversity," in which he pleaded that the Conservatives openly recognize and legitimatize differences within the movement. If, he argued, the wings of the movement are so divergent, the Conservative movement must seek its unity on bases other than a common attitude toward the *halakah.* If such other bases could be found (and he suggested at least four), then the Conservatives might even be able to afford the luxury of having two separate groups, each approaching the problems of Jewish law from a different angle.

Last spring, the Rabbinical Assembly convened a conference on Jewish law, at which the two major attitudes became quite clear. One group favored the most liberal interpretation of the *halakah,* but insisted that nothing must be done either to abrogate old laws or to institute new ones. Another group, among whom were some Reconstructionists, urged that interpretation be used to the maximum, but that, in the event that interpretation of the *halakah* proved to be inadequate to deal with new situations, legislation should be resorted to.

At the recent convention, one whole day was devoted to the discussion of a philosophy for Conservative Judaism. This discussion revolved mainly around this issue—interpretation only versus interpretation plus legislation. The resolution which was finally adopted was a victory for those who had tried for long to legitimatize the latter approach. Significantly, this was accomplished without forcing a split in the organization.

The resolution provides that the Law Committee, charged with the responsibility for rendering authoritative opinions on all matters of Jewish practice, be enlarged to include *all* the varying viewpoints within the Assembly; that its decisions shall be recorded and circulated in such form as to disclose not only the majority view, but any and all minority opinions. Only those decisions which are arrived at unanimously are binding upon the members of the Assembly. In all other instances, members are free to follow either the majority or the minority view.

We believe that, when the new committee is set up, and its decisions begin to emerge, these decisions will make fascinating material for adult study, for here will be found the new and evolving *gemarah* of our time, the record of a living, and changing Judaism, sensitive to the demands of the environment, respon-

sive to the currents of thought among the most thoughtful and serious of Jewish leaders. If this step is followed through conscientiously, the Conservative movement will demonstrate how Judaism can successfully combine tradition and change, reverence for the past and statesmanlike understanding of realities.

THE WAY CLEARED FOR IMPLEMENTING THE JANOWSKY REPORT

THE Janowsky Report is now history. When parts of it were first made available in mimeographed form, it became quite clear from its content that much opposition was to be expected. The Report made a number of definite recommendations, of which the most important was that "the program of the Jewish Center should devote primary attention to Jewish content . . . and should be permeated by the spiritual-cultural factors which constitute the Jewish way of life."

With slight changes in the phrasing, that did not affect the essence of the report, it has since been adopted almost in toto by the National Council of the Jewish Welfare Board in Chicago and has also been approved on the whole by the National Association of Jewish Center Workers at their convention in Atlantic City. The approval of the main principles of the Report by the convention of the Center Workers is the more significant, because from this group, if from any, opposition might have been anticipated. Moreover, it is on the acquiescence of this group that the success of all efforts at implementing the Report largely depends. For the Report contained a detailed study showing that, while the professional workers have had an adequate general education, their Jewish education "has been sadly neglected and is grossly inadequate." Over 82 percent of them are college graduates and over 67 percent of these have taken courses in, or hold degrees from, schools of social work, but more than 20 percent have had no formal Jewish education whatsoever, and an additional 40 percent have had no more than the training provided by the elementary Hebrew school or Sunday school. "In other words, over 60 percent have not reached the level of a high school Jewish education." This is reflected in the types of programs that were offered by the 301 Centers affiliated with the National Jewish Welfare Board. ". . . Nearly 30 percent of the affiliated agencies report not a single project or program of activity of specific Jewish interest or orientation . . . and the figures for the various age groups show that over 23 percent of the Centers report no Jewish program for children; nearly 35 percent offer none for adults; and at least 55 percent list none for youth." Perhaps just one other example will suffice. In reply to the question whether a belief in the desirability of Jewish survival should be a requirement for the professional staff of a Jewish Center, some 12.5 percent of the local Center Board members voted "no" and nearly 5 percent voted "don't know."

Taking all the above figures into consideration, it was to be expected that considerable opposition to the recommendations of the Report would develop. In fact there was some apprehension that a vociferous minority, fearing that their very jobs were threatened, might even try to scuttle the entire report.

The report was first presented in May, 1947, at the Annual Meeting of the National Jewish Welfare Board in Pittsburgh. About a year has passed since that time and the opposition has had ample opportunity to organize its forces and to crystallize its thinking.

We were therefore quite happy to see that the draft of the statement of prin-

ciples adopted by the annual meeting of the National Council of JWB, conformed on the whole with the recommendations of the Janowsky Report.

We are even more gratified to know that, at the Atlantic City conference of the National Association of the Jewish Center Workers, though some differences arose as to the amount of authority that the National Jewish Welfare Boad should exercise over the local Center, the preponderant majority favored the positive aspects of the Janowsky Report.

The time for discussion is now past. We look forward to an immediate and vigorous implementation, by the Jewish Welfare Board and the Jewish Community Centers throughout the country, of the main conclusions of the report.

REALITIES AND VALUES

RABBI LOUIS WOLSEY, ONE OF the founders of the American Council for Judaism, has not only resigned from it but has condemned its recent policies in a scathing denunciation.

Rabbi Wolsey is still no Zionist but he charges that the Council has departed from its original purpose of advancing Jewish religion and has been swamped by "an influx of members who looked upon the Council as a device for assimilation, or for adventuring, or as a balm for those who did not believe in organized religion."

He also charges the Council with "snubbing rabbinical cooperation," and calls attention to the fact that its rabbinical membership has dwindled from over forty to about five.

As to its Americanism, he states that "it was best represented by non-support of the chaplaincy in the last war. It seemed to stand in terror of Jewish immigration to Palestine, lest they form 'a foreign government' there."

There is a rabbinic saying, "Woe to the pastry which its baker admits is no good."

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THE CULTURAL HIGHWAY BEtween Israel and America admits of two-way traffic. While Habimah has brought to America some of the fine products of dramatic art in Israel, Ohel, the theatre project of the Histadrut, which specializes in plays of social significance, has included in this season's repertoire a play written by Americans for the American stage. It is Dusseau and Gow's "Deep Are the Roots," translated into Hebrew by B. Ephraim. The play deals with the Negro problem. Its production in Israel is significant of the importance which the social consciousness of the Yishuv attaches to the struggle of the colored races for equality with the white.

▼

STUDENTS OF THE JEWISH Theological Seminary agreed this week to give one year to the service of world Jewry without class credits or salaries. The program, as announced by Dr. Moshe Davis includes such services as labor in the defense and building battalions in Israel; work in schools, orphanages, and relief organizations in Europe; guiding small outlying American-Jewish communities that cannot maintain a rabbi; and "devoting one full year to intensive study of Jewish tradition."

The idea of giving in youth a full year's unpaid service to Judaism is an excellent one in the present emergency status of Judaism. It has been borrowed from the Yishuv, by which a year of national service was demanded and obtained from all Jewish youth even before Israel declared its independence as a state.

The plan should be regarded as an emergency measure. It must not be construed as exempting the Jewish community from adequately remunerating professional services that are rendered it. The

idealism of youth must not be exploited by materialistic boards of directors who want to economize.

We doubt, moreover, whether "intensive Jewish study" should be included in the program. Such study is desirable and should be encouraged, but it is not service. It is, at best, preparation for service. Many a learned person does not put his learning to any public use. Jewish study should be regarded rather as a privilege than as a service.

▼

In addition to having to meet the $250,000,000 quota of the United Jewish Appeal, the Jews of America will be called upon to raise $135,000,000 for local philanthropic and communal endeavors. That is the sum deemed necessary by the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds.

The need for so large a sum arises from the postponement, during the last ten years of world crisis, of many necessary projects. The CJFWF report shows that 70 communities will use the funds for new hospitals, community centers, homes for the aged, congregational buildings, and convalescent facilities.

It cautions against unplanned and uncoordinated building campaigns. Such campaigns, it reminds us, characterized the boom years following the first World War and proved disastrous to many a community in the subsequent depression.

Both the caution and the appeal of the CJFWF should be heeded. American Jews have enough wealth and should have enough generosity to meet the demands of our local Jewish communities as well as the demands of the UJA.

▼

We have called attention from time to time to movements in Christianity analogous in their general intention to the Reconstructionist movement in Judaism. A recent dispatch from Istanbul, quoted in a *Religious News Service* release of May 19, calls attention to a similar movement in Mohammedan circles.

It tells of a growing number of Moslems who, contrary to orthodox Moslem tradition, encourage the reading of the Jewish and Christian Scriptures by Mohammedans.

It also tells of a growing tendency to reinterpret the Islamic belief in predestination to mean simply that God gave man the power to do good and evil and that man is responsible for the choice he makes.

Perhaps most significant of all is the reference by the head of the Turkish Bureau of Religious Affairs, in a leading review, to a tradition which cites Mohammed as having taught that every hundred years God would send to his people a prophet who would renew religion. This, according to the author of the article, means that "the religion of Islam is, in the most exact meaning of the term, a religion of progress and renewal."

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The Spring issue of *Harofe Haivri,* the Hebrew Medical Journal, marks the beginning of the 21st year of its publication. It is edited by Dr. Moses Einhorn and, in addition to technical medical subjects, discusses a variety of related topics of interest both to the medical profession and to laymen.

The current issue, for example, contains an article by Dr. A. Klopstock on "Amoebiasis in Palestine," another, by Dr. A. H. Merzbach, on "Mental Health in Palestine," and a third, by Dr. M. Buchman, on the therapeutic value of the Hot Springs of Tiberias. All original articles are summarized in English for readers not familiar with Hebrew.

The magazine has made, and continues to make, important contributions to the development of medical terminology in Hebrew.

Some Applications of Kurt Lewin's Social Dynamics

By NOAH NARDI

In our last preceding issue we published the first of a series of three articles by Noah Nardi on the late Kurt Lewin and his contribution to social psychology. It contained an interesting general review of his life and activities. The contribution of Lewin to psychology consists primarily of his teaching that, if psychology is to be applied to the improvement of human relations, it must reckon with the human being not as an isolated individual but as a member of a group. By applying to a group the method action-research which Lewin devised, it is possible to change the habits and attitudes of the individuals who constitute it. The present article gives a number of examples of how Lewin's technique has been applied in the process of reeducation of certain groups. Our next issue will contain the concluding article of the series, which will discuss some possible applications of Lewin's methodology in the field of Jewish education. —EDITORS

RE-EDUCATION and re-training are primarily functions in group dynamics. They must occur within the framework of the individual's total life in the group and must include changes of knowledge and beliefs, changes of values and standards, changes of emotional attachments and needs, and changes of every-day conduct. All in all, the task which the re-educative process has to fulfill is tantamount to a change in one's culture. It is rather obvious that lectures or other similarly abstract methods are not of much avail in bringing about such changes in outlook and conduct. Similarly, it has also been shown that possession of correct knowledge does not suffice to rectify false perception. *It is the degree to which the individual becomes actively involved in the problem that counts.* Moreover, the acceptance of the new system of values and beliefs implies also the acceptance of the standards of a specific group as the standard of authority and the source of a new social atmosphere. As Lewin put it: "The individual accepts the new system of values and beliefs by accepting belongingness to a group." This feeling of belongingness is essential to any acceptance of new values in the re-education of the individual. Indeed, experiments with groups have shown that the behavior of an individual can be very quickly changed through a change of the social atmosphere within the group.

Dr. Herman's Action-Research on Zionist Attitudes

An interesting illustration of how these theories can be applied in action-research on a Jewish topic is presented by the unpublished dissertation of Dr. Simon Herman, one of Lewin's students at the Institute of Group Dynamics of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, on the problem of Zionism in America. Dr. Herman made an attempt to study the psychology of Zionist and anti-Zionist orientations. He worked with four types of groups (a) Zionists who intend to go to Palestine, (b) Zionists who have no intention at present of going to Palestine, (c) non-Zionists and (d) anti-Zionists. He was especially concerned with the dynamic aspects of these four groups, namely, the motives which make individuals move from one group to another. (It was noted that shifting was in one direction,—from non-Zionist to Zionist.) He found that, when a young American Jew reaches the decision to go to Palestine, it is always done in a group context and through the acceptance of new

values and of new group belongingness. Among the conclusions reached are those related to the problem of the extension and the intensification of the Hechalutz Movement in America and the reorganization and revitalization of Zionist Youth Organizations in this country.

The Harvard Student Project of IZFA

A modified version of Dr. Herman's questionnaire was used in the IZFA (Intercollegiate Zionist Federation of America) Harvard students' project. The motivation for it was the annual membership drive of the organization, and the students came to Lewin with the request that he help them to carry it out along the lines of action-research. The method used here may be found useful for other organizations as well.

Fifty-four Jewish student residents of a few selected Harvard and Radcliffe dormitories were individually interviewed with a view to discovering their attitudes towards Zionism and other areas of Jewish interest. When this had been done, a change experiment was planned to determine whether individual persuasion or group decision would be the more successful in changing negative attitudes towards Zionism to positive ones and in inducing students to join the organization.

Tabulation of the interview data showed that the students were of four types: (1) those who already belonged to the organization; (2) those who were likely to join; (3) those who were favorably disposed; (4) those who were unlikely to join. The responses of each of these groups were analyzed and a profile for each group was made out. Types 1, 2 and 4 presented decidedly different profiles, but type 3's profile proved very similar to that of type 2. In the change experiment, group (1) was left alone. Group 2 were given membership blanks. Although group 3 presented much the same profile as type 2, the students in the group were more reluctant to join the organization. The members of this group were consequently divided in two, with the first half subjected to individual persuasion, while the members of the second half were asked to attend a group discussion meeting. This discussion group was handled by means of projection. The group was told about the similarity of the profiles of group 2 and 3 and was told about the differences in their attitudes toward joining the organization. They were not told that they themselves were classified as belonging to the third group. They were then asked to analyze group 3's reasoning and suggest means of persuading them to join IZFA. Group 4 was handled in a somewhat similar manner.

It was found that group decision was much more effective with group 3 than the method of individual persuasion. Group 4, which was made up of students unlikely to join, was subjected to the group decision technique alone but with unsuccessful results. In other words, the group approach was found to be most effective only with those already favorably disposed.

The CCI and Minority Problems

Lewin had a remarkable ability for making people enthusiastic about his ideas and he succeeded in convincing the leadership of the American Jewish Congress that to discover the real causes of anti-Semitism and the methods for combating it, research was needed; and that no research could be complete unless something tangible had been achieved. Thus his idea of "no research without action and no action without research" led to the organization of the Committee on Community Interrelations, called the CCI. A generous budget was allocated which made possible the establish-

ment of an imposing scientific agency of first rate psychologists and sociologists. In bringing this about, Lewin succeeded in demonstrating a basic assumption of his concerning action-research, namely that very little change can be brought about unless social agencies or organizations can be brought together with groups of social scientists and blended into consolidated action agencies.

The Commission on Community Interrelations is such an organization, and it combines the techniques of social science with the skills and energies of laymen. Its purpose is to find out facts about prejudice and intolerance in real life-situations and to take practical steps toward reducing these evils. The CCI approach to minority problems is different than that of any other organization in that it minimizes the importance of either "complaining" or "preaching good-will" as a means of improving group relationships. The CCI maintains that the accepted procedures used to combat anti-Semitism, such as lectures, interfaith meetings, pamphlets, radio-time and other programs of a similar nature, do not really change attitudes nor do they seem to eliminate the basic causes of hostility.

The Coney Island Project

To illustrate what action-research means, we bring here excerpts from an article by Howard Whitman called "Anti-Riot Squad," published in *Collier's* (November 19, 1945). It is a report of a CCI project in Coney Island following race riots that broke out on the eve of Yom Kippur.

> The CCI sent a "task force" into ailing Coney Island. Its job: to hold the patient's hand and administer suggestions while the patient got himself well. . . .
>
> Doctor Kay sent her task force through the embittered neighborhood, from door to door. Step No. 1 was to get the facts. Eight university-trained social scientists did this job: two Catholics, two Negroes and four Jews, since the Coney Island neighborhood is predominantly Jewish. . . .
>
> There were 212 long probing interviews that lasted an hour or more and gave the people plenty of chance to air their feelings. . . . Among many revelations were the two cardinal ones: that Coney Island's youth, underprivileged and abandoned to the questionable life of the cellar clubs—impromptu social clubs which the youths form usually for dances, gambling and heavy petting parties—needed help a great deal more than it needed censure; that many of Coney Island's adults were lonesome and desperately needed a warm, human community environment.

What the gang members wanted most was a club of their own. The CCI helped them to organize a club which was opened in January, 1946. In the beginning, most of the expenses were covered by the organization, but the boys eventually found legitimate ways of paying for the upkeep of the club, such as the staging of boxing shows and the like.

How the "Task Force" Operates

The action-research procedure implies that, when a project is undertaken, staff members of the CCI actually "invade" the troubled area. The Commission calls these members a "task force," a name taken over from the army vocabulary to signify the nature and scope of its dealing with the problem. This "task force" includes trained interviewers of different nationalities, people able to go into homes of all types and talk the language, to really find out the basic social, economic, religious and other causes at the roots of the anti-Semitic or other group disturbances. Such "task forces" are usually made up in accordance with the needs of a given situation.

In one of the CCI research projects brief anti-Semitic "incidents" are staged before clubs and groups of teachers, social workers, ministers, labor union members and others. Passersby on Times Square or elsewhere may be brought indoors to watch dramatized episodes and

asked to express themselves on whether or not they like or dislike the ways in which such made-up incidents were handled. Audience reactions are then analyzed and individuals interviewed.

The purpose behind this project is to determine how a Jew should deal with anti-Semitic incidents in public places. Should he speak up when a slurring remark is passed in the subway or in the elevated, or should he not, and if he should—what is the best type of answer one should make in reply to prejudicial remarks. Some of the findings made thus far by the CCI deserve our very careful consideration. "First of all," says Mr. Abraham Citron, in charge of this project, "it is well to bear in mind that they are much more than local irritations. They are the stuff from which full-scale anti-Semitic behavior is made. Indeed, actual tests of these incidents, carried out by the CCI, reveal that there is a definite *increase* in prejudice among members of a group who hear such a remark, *when that remark is not answered.*" He goes on to say that more people are affected that way than by hate sheets and hate meetings. An effective reply, he claims, when made on the spot, tends to erase the newly established prejudice.

What should be the character of such a reply? Certain kinds of "content" answers were found to be effective: one is to mention in an impersonal way the American ideal of democracy—that the United States was built up by all kinds of people. Another type of answer would be something like this: "I was cheated by a Protestant, but I don't condemn all Protestants!" etc., etc. In making any reply, a very important principle must be borne in mind, namely, to deliver it with a tone of serious and militant intent, also to have the attention focused not on the bigot himself, but on the group.

It is anticipated that this and other techniques developed by the CCI in combating anti-Semitism can be transmitted to organizations Jewish and non-Jewish, and men and women will be trained eventually for spreading these ideas throughout the country.

The Bronx High School of Science Project

Among the more recent projects is the one connected with the Bronx High School of Science. This project attempts to reduce prejudice through the reorganization of curricular subject-matter. It is by now a matter of common agreement that neither biology as an isolated subject of study, nor the social sciences as they are taught at present, can insure the acquisition of positive racial attitudes. The CCI, mindful of the necessity of involving the city school system in combating prejudice, is testing an interesting hypothesis in this project, namely, whether or not, by blending all the courses in social studies and sciences into one modern problems course, with special reference to race and similar problems, better results could not be achieved. The project is being carried out with the cooperation of the Board of Education of the City of New York and involves two equated groups of 200 each, with one group following the new integrated course and the other the regular routine teaching. This project is still in the process of operation and is being watched very closely by the city school people.

The Discrimination Index

Another interesting idea in the process of development by the CCI is the establishment of the Discrimination Index for the community. The purpose of this project is to develop a method whereby it could be ascertained how much anti-Jewish discrimination there is in a com-

munity in such areas as employment, equality of educational opportunities, housing, use of public facilities, etc. The ways of arriving at this index are through special interviews, analysis of official surveys, discussions with key people in the community, and the like. After establishing the Index of Discrimination there follows the second and most vital phase of the project, namely, the action part. Responsible people in the community are presented with the facts and called upon to cope with the situation. Local action organizations representing different civic groups are then brought into being and public concern for combating of prejudice is thus aroused and provided with channels for expression. The crux of the problem is, of course, to find the right people for both the fact-finding and the organization of local action groups.

Other CCI activities include a project in Baltimore which came as a result of increased tension between pupils in public schools and those in Hebrew schools. A panel of forty school teachers, Jewish and Christian, was organized to cope with the problem. They were taught the proper techniques of collecting data about minority problems and ways of doing something about them.

Research in Child Attitudes to Judaism

A very interesting research project is the one carried on by Marion Radke and Jack Horowitz in Boston. It is called "The Development of Attitudes of Jewish Children towards Jewish Group-Belongingness." No conclusions are as yet available, but the reader may be interested in the general set-up of the project and in some of the findings. The investigation involved about 100 children of both sexes aged 7-17. They were from two Jewish Centers, one located in an area of Boston which has a predominantly Jewish population of lower middle class; the other is in a Jewish section which feels the impact of an encroaching Negro population. The questionnaire, a group test, asks such questions as, "Suppose that you can join a club. What kind of a name would you like to have—a name that is Jewish, a name that is not Jewish?" Other choice situations which are common to the child's life in the home and the community were included. The situations of choice between Jewish and non-Jewish involved identification by a label, activity content, associations and philanthropy. In addition to the child's choice or rejection of Jewish aspects, his reasons for the acceptance or rejection were obtained.

The interesting and rather discouraging result of this study is that the higher the age, the greater is the rejection of things Jewish, with a drop from as much as 90 percent positive belongingness at the ages of 7-8 to only 30 percent in 17-year-old groups. This trend, however, is reversed in only one situation, namely, in matters of philanthropy, where the higher the age, the greater the recognition for the need of Jewish philanthropy. A psychoanalyst could explain this phenomenon in terms of sense of guilt felt by the youngster in the rejection of his Jewishness. A case for such an assumption can also be built up in view of the excessive forms of philanthropy observed with many an assimilated Jew.

Group Belongingness and Group Adjustment

It is important to remember that the intensification of belongingness, or the changing of group goals, is a re-educative process based on dealing with individuals as group members and not with individuals as such. As has already been pointed out, it is easier and more economical to change the ideology of a group than that of an individual. The reasons for this are:

(a) an individual cannot allow himself to deviate considerably from group standards unless he is ready to give up his group affiliation, and (b) his ideology is not really his own, but that of the group to which he belongs. Therefore, change the group and the individual will change with it.

The psychological implications of this theory are far-reaching and are in contradiction to the individual case study approach now prevalent in social work, guidance and teaching. These are a serious challenge to many of the psychoanalytic doctrines according to which every individual is viewed primarily as an "individual human being" whose conduct is determined by his own innate drives without allowing proper consideration to his behavior as a member of a group.

Personal adjustment, therefore, is, according to Lewin, one of the manifestations of the group belongingness of an individual. While not all maladjustments of Jewish individuals stem from their being Jewish, it was Lewin's contention that there is hardly a maladjusted Jew for whom being Jewish has not influenced the type and degree of his maladjustment. This makes for another good basis for Jewish education. In fact, the "sudden" interest in Jewish education which Center and social workers have been showing in the last few years is an indication of the growing realization on the part of the community that Jewish education is important not only as a means for the transmission of our cultural heritage, but also as a defensive measure for better emotional and social adjustment. In view of what has happened to the Jewish people in the last ten years, it is to be expected that more and more of our young will become increasingly conscious of themselves as Jews and will be led to consider themselves as unfortunate members of an unwanted group in a hostile world. An understanding of our rich spiritual and cultural heritage is, therefore, as necessary from the psychological point of view in the education of our children as it is from the cultural, and more than ever before is it important that we build in the minds of our children those positive attitudes toward Jewish life that would make for a well-adjusted Jew.

What are the factors to determine whether or not Jewish boys and girls will develop a balanced pattern of behavior and what can teachers and parents do to make this development more certain? The answer to these questions will depend on how harmonious is the development of the Jewish child and how adjusted he is to himself and his environment.

The factors most essential in developing a proper pattern of behavior in a Jewish child would therefore be, first of all, the kind of environment and group the child will belong to. In Lewin's words, the group to which an individual, young or old, belongs is the ground on which he stands, which gives or denies him social status and security. This ground determines what the individual will wish to do and how he will do it. There is enough to show that stability or instability of this social ground makes for stability or instability in the growing child. As the child grows up his feeling of belonging to certain groups becomes an ever more important constituent of his expanding world and determines his aims and ambitions, his conceptions of right and wrong.

In the Army, the most severe breakdowns resulting from anti-Semitism have occurred among those young Jewish men and women whose parents have tried to shelter them from their Jewishness. These people, when denied the right of belonging to the Gentile group, of which from

early childhood they had been led to feel themselves a part, collapsed socially as well as emotionally. They discovered that they belonged nowhere, that neither are they Gentiles nor are they ready to identify themselves consciously as Jews.

This uncertainty, according to Lewin, can hardly be due to the fact that the Jewish individual is not only a Jew but also an American. Lewin accepts the contention of Louis D. Brandeis that such double loyalty in America is sociologically sound, a principle well-demonstrated by the existence in America of many national groups such as Poles, Swedes, Italians and others, all united as Americans. It is not, therefore, the belongingness to many groups that concerns Lewin, but the *uncertainty of belongingness.*

The Cultural and Psychological Role of Jewish Education

Jewish education, therefore, is both a cultural and psychological necessity. It is to bring to Jewish children the positive aspects of Judaism—that Jewish life can be a solace and comfort to them and a tower of strength in these bitter times. It is also to give them a sense of belongingness to a group with a rich tradition and a long history; a group having a future as well as a past; not a group one must belong to because one is born into it, but one whose culture can still be a guide to a future that holds promise and hope.

Through Jewish education Jews should be able to give their children a sense of the pertinency, the worthwhileness and the dignity of Jewish life; that Jewish life in a rebuilt Palestine has something to give not only to Jews, but to the rest of the world as well. In a world in which violence and injustice are enthroned, Jews must again have recourse to the Jewish tradition which stands for justice, peace, freedom and democracy; the very things which Western civilization seems to be lacking at present. If we can make our tradition a living tradition, a law of life, it can become once again a means of spiritual and psychological regeneration.

However, to live up to these expectations, Jewish education must be revitalized and made more effective than it is today. It is our belief that Lewin's theories and practices in group dynamics have a great deal to offer in this direction.

American Liberalism and Zionism

By IRVING LEVITAS

FOR many years, the Zionist movement has functioned as a dynamic force in American Jewish life. It has served to provide many American Jews with an attitude towards Jewish life and thought that has proved very effective in promoting education and culture. Even though, on the popular level, Zionist speakers many times grossly abuse the facts of Jewish history in an effort to "prove" that Jewish life since the period of the destruction of the Second Temple was a life that consisted only of misery, those who have participated in Zionist activities have also been concerned with the promotion of Jewish life in America.

However, together with this enthusiastic response to Zionism, there has been growing up among Zionist circles if not a neglect of American problems, certainly a second-thought approach to them. Zionist periodicals and Zionist speakers (a notable exception is *The Jewish Frontier*) have discussed the problems of Palestine solely, and have created the impression

that the general character of Jewish life in America is subsidiary to the development of Jewish life in Palestine.

The Tendency to Regard Zionism as Irrelevant to American Life

This impression is not basic to Zionist ideology, as any student of Zionist theory knows. But the fact remains that, in the printed word and the verbal exhortation, one could find Zionists who are much more interested in the makeup of the Asefat Ha-Nivharim than in the composition of the American Congress. As one prominent Jewish Bundist put it to the writer, one of his objections to the Zionist movement was that the Zionists paid more attention to the planting of a tree in Palestine than they did to the election of a liberal alderman from their own ward. If one thing has been proved during the last few years, it is that international peace is indivisible, and the work of the American liberal is as instrumental in creating a world of peace (including Palestine) as is the *halutz*.

This negative attitude to American affairs on the part of many Zionists, makes it increasingly difficult to develop the thesis implicit in Zionist thinking: that the Zionist movement is an attempt to correct the ambiguous position of the Jews resulting from the creation of the modern state, and not just a mass migration movement.

Under the conditions of political anti-Semitism a dualism has arisen in the minds of many that would otherwise not exist, namely, that Zionism concerns itself only with Palestine and that American Jewish life has no relation to it. The result of that dualism has been that many young American Jews feel that participation in the Zionist movement must detract from their participation in general liberal activities. They therefore do not affiliate with Zionist groups. At the same time, the unfortunate situation has arisen that participation of active young Zionists in the political movements of their communities is noticeably lacking.

After the war, the writer attempted to test his suppositions through direct analysis of communities in his area. Having an opportunity to travel through many parts of the country, he was able to observe that this situation was, in a general way, representative of the American Jewish scene.

The Relation of Zionism to Liberalism in American Life

An interesting illustration of this problem is afforded by the reception given the presentation of the thesis that Zionism implicitly involves the American Jew, as a Zionist, in the liberal movement in his community. Proponents of this thesis would observe that the aim of Zionism has been to re-organize Jewish life wherever Jews live, a process which could only be completed in a liberal atmosphere. In many instances, individual listeners would arise in indignation and state that they were active in this or that group and felt that the relationship between Zionism and liberalism was only coincidental. In many other instances, the statement that the accomplishments of the Zionist movement in Palestine should carry with them the implication that in this country the ideals of the Zionist movement should also be realized in terms of American liberalism met with scepticism. The discrepancies between the praising of the cooperative and trade-union movement in Palestine and the implicit censure of the trade union in America as going "too far" indicated the extent of the dichotomy in the mind of some of our Zionists. The orientation of the American trade-union movement from Gomperism, with its antipathy to political action, to contemporary labor political-action groups, illustrates the

potentialities of American liberalism from that source. Wherever the most active participants in the Zionist movement in any community were those whose economic activities were anything but liberal, the dilemma was intensified.

Many instances, I am sure, can be cited also of communities in which the youth were not in Zionist work because the local Zionist leaders did not represent the liberal opinion of their community. In effect, assuming that to be a Zionist and to be an American were not necessarily related, these young people felt themselves under the necessity of choosing between devotion to Zionism and to liberalism, and chose the latter.

But what of the great expansion of interest in Zionism among the American Jewish youth? Is it a mirage? Has it been based on false interpretations? The answer to this question is not simple. No doubt a great deal of this youth participation in Zionism is based on the fact that Jews are being hunted and harried throughout Europe, and that there is, therefore, a moral obligation to assist them to get to Palestine. But note that the moral obligation is to get the *European* Jews to Palestine, with the consequent implication that the Zionist movement still does not have anything to say to the American Jews as such. The mantle of "philanthropic" Judaism is now being used to cloak activity on behalf of the Jewish state. This is not as it should be; we should not permit the Zionist movement among our youth to be solely concerned with the problem of Palestine.

After all, thousands of our American Jewish youth expect to spend the rest of their lives in this country. We are committing a crime when we permit them to feel that, as members of the American Jewish community, they have no obligation to promote liberalism in their cities, that this is not the duty of all who desire an intensified Jewish life on the democratic American scene. It is a peculiar state of affairs when the Zionists can praise a Congressman for having said a commendatory word regarding the Jewish state, even though he aligns himself with reaction in America. Are we so poor that we pick up crumbs from the oratorical tables of anyone who cares to leave them?

Our American Jewish youth must be fighting side by side with liberalism in this country in this great period of crisis. We must be among those who try to promote the Marshall Plan, the Housing Bill, FEPC, the Stratton Bill, and other measures that aim to make this country a more democratic one. We must make the American Zionist a protagonist of all that is good and permanent in American liberalism on the grounds that only in a liberal America can he remain a Jew.

It is interesting to observe that the recent trend in public relations on the part of agencies that have heretofore concerned themselves primarily with preventing anti-Semitism is that of fostering general American ideals of racial and religious understanding. We cannot have the kind of America we want, in which we can lead the Jewish life we want, unless it is a democratic America.

The Need to Combat Anti-Semitism and Assimilationism with Liberalism

The history of Jewish communal life in America differs from that of all previous Jewish communal life in other countries in that it is possible for a Jew in this country to refuse to participate in Jewish life with the knowledge that no punitive measures can be taken against him by the Jewish community. In effect, we have in America the potential right of every Jew to refuse to be considered a Jew. There may be some who say that

this is impossible, since anti-Semitism will force the delinquent Jew back into the fold. However, when one considers that we are working, with might and main, to develop the kind of America in which such prejudices as anti-Semitism will be removed, we can assume that this negative force making for adherence to the Jewish community will also be removed. In other words, in a perfectly democratic America it will be all the more possible for American Jews to break their affiliations with the Jewish group.

What this implies is that Jewish life and thought must be made amenable to the demands of the American scene. One immediately concedes that, under any circumstances, good or bad, there will be Jews who will continue to identify themselves with the Jewish group. But their stamina and enthusiasm will not be shared by the vast majority of the Jewish community. And, unless we want to make Judaism a belief of the select few, we must make these approaches to the American Jew on his own terms.

As a second premise, it may be assumed that liberalism in America contains within itself the best possible technique for group activity. Thanks to the Jewish tradition, to the ideological framework of Jewish life, there are sufficient resources in Jewish thinking to promote liberalism from both American and Jewish sources. It is not at all necessary to adopt the theory of an eminent publicist that only through Orthodox Judaism can we find it possible to lead a Jewish life here, if we abolish the alienation which is characteristic of a non-integrated Jewish life.

The idea of creating an American Jewish community that is rooted in Jewish values seems to be the most important task of Jewish communal life in this country today. That can be accomplished only through the impetus of Zionism. For the essence of Zionim is, as Mordecai M. Kaplan observes, the endeavor to have "Jews achieve their own redemption as a matter of justice and not of charity."

We are now living with the third generation of American Jews, for the Johnson Immigration Act may be considered, in a sense, as marking the "birth" of American Jewry. The direct impact of European culture on American Jewish life ceased with the passage of that Act; our American Jewish youth today are thoroughly and completely American in their approach to Judaism. We must accordingly revise the writing of American Jewish history. We should not treat it as though it consisted merely of a series of immigration waves and the institutions they deposited on these shores. Jewish life in America is not lived in a vacuum. Jewish history must therefore record the impact of the American scene on the transmitted Jewish institutions and ideas.

Since Zionism is the most significant movement in contemporary Jewish life, and since it is to be viewed as a general technique of reinterpreting Jewish life on the American scene, it seems to follow that this Zionist activity must be thoroughly integrated with American liberalism.

The Natural Alliance of Zionism and Liberalism

The beneficent results of this re-interpretation, already evidenced in the activities of the Reconstructionist group, of the American Association for Jewish Education, and other groups of similar character, will be the understanding that Jewish life in America is not only possible, but desirable, and should be presented on the highest level. The thesis of Engelman and Grossman on the relationship of Jewish life and a vicious individualistic competitive society, which

seems to carry with it the attendant frustrations of that Jewish life, can then be opposed by the argument that, through a more liberal economy, Jewish life can survive. What this means, in effect, is that, in fighting for American liberalism, we shall be in a better position to consider the future of Jewish life in America. It must be clear that we cannot consider this American Jewish community only as a reservoir for Zionist work in Palestine, or more negatively, as a community ultimately doomed to extinction, and that we cannot be satisfied with demanding a Jewish life *only* in Palestine.

We must emphasize the fact that American Jewish life must be developed, as a positive concomitant of the development of Jewish life in Palestine. We, therefore, must oppose any attempt that repudiates the importance of the pervasive American culture, and does not set the same standards for American Jewish creativity that it does for general American thinking. What we should do is to emphasize the fact that an Anglo-Jewish book is not to be praised just because it is about Jewish life, which seems to be a criterion in contemporary Anglo-Jewish criticism, but that that Anglo-Jewish book must reach the same standards which would apply to any novel or essay in general literature. This same demand must be made of our educational systems, our group work programs, and our organizational activity. That these should be possessed of Jewish content is fundamental; it is not enough for a group that wants to be Jewish, merely to meet in the building of a Jewish agency, or, for that matter, to meet for the discussion of some book wholly irrelevant to Judaism, merely because the meeting is attended exclusively by Jews. As Janowsky observed, that would be ghettoization.

In conclusion, what is being suggested is not a blueprint for American Jewish communal life, but rather a series of premises that will lead to the presentation of such a blueprint. If the above statements are so construed, the intent of the author has been realized.

Report From Eretz

By JACK J. COHEN

YOU will remember that my second letter contained an account of some of the thinking of the Yishuv concerning tradition. Now that some of the plans for the state have been announced by the Jewish Agency,[1] the implementation of tradition becomes a burning issue. For a *Jewish* state obviously implies some distinctive *Jewish* aspects in its makeup. The kind of democracy upon which the state is to be based, the treatment of minorities, the position of women, the relationship between the Jewish religion and the state must all either reckon with the tradition of the past or ignore it. In either case, some attitude must be adopted toward tradition.

Since the middle of December, articles in the Hebrew press have dealt with the question of the degree to which the constitution and law of the Jewish state can be based on traditional Jewish law. Some of the views expressed should be of particular interest to those Jews who wonder if there is any real contribution that American Jewry can make to the Yishuv. After studying these articles, many will

[1] This report was written in February, before the declaration of Israel's independence.

agree with me that much guidance is needed by the Yishuv in the interpretation of religion and democracy.

As the Orthodox View the Problem

Reporting in *Hatzofeh* on a meeting of rabbis in Tel Aviv on January 20-21, Rabbi Techoresh writes that Chief Rabbi Herzog spoke among other things, on "bringing the life of the Yishuv into agreement with the laws of the Torah—and on the constitution, which must be prepared by rabbinical experts and which must be set up in accord with the laws and spirit of Torah, for only Torah can insure us a full and just life." Rabbi Herzog is reported to have worked out his own formula for the constitution.

The Orthodox leaders always adopt a simple, naive view that the Jewish state can be set up in strict accord with traditional law as it has been handed down to the present day. Again in *Hatzofeh,* Rabbi Solomon Gorontchik states: "The prevalent view of the religious community is that existing traditional laws must be established as the basis of the code for the new courts. Actually, this cannot be easily accomplished. The traditional laws of judges and witnesses would tread upon the rights of minorities and women, and moreover, would arouse much opposition both from the secular elements of the Yishuv and from the United Nations. The Torah disqualifies as judges and witnesses any Jew who violates a law, not to mention non-Jews. It disqualifies women from acting as witnesses, except in certain cases. These difficulties render it practically impossible to base the code for the new courts completely on the Torah." Needless to say, Rabbi Gorontchik has stated the objections to some phases of traditional law as well as any secularist could have done.[2]

How does Rabbi Gorontchik hope to resolve these difficulties? It would take us far afield to follow the details of his argumentation, but the general approach seems clear enough. As is to be expected from a proponent of Orthodoxy, there is no effort to suggest any amendment or abrogation of traditional legislation. Rather does Rabbi Gorontchik seek a means of interpreting tradition to fit the needs of the hour. And so, for example, he makes use of a number of principles of Rabbinic law to justify the appointment of non-Jewish judges for the courts of the *Jewish* state. For example, according to a law in the *Shulhan Arukh,* cases involving Jews are not to be judged in non-Jewish courts, even when both parties agree to accept the court's judgment. To follow this law blindly would obviously mean that Jews could be judged only by Jewish judges in cases where Jews alone are involved. However, one of the later authorities provides a way out. For if the two Jewish litigants accept the judge, not as a representative of another faith but simply as an individual in whom they trust, they are permitted to have their case tried by him.

In a similar fashion, it is possible to legalize the appointment of non-Jewish judges even though Jewish law appears to disqualify them. In a number of sources, it is found, "A king is not to be appointed from a community of 'strangers.' This rule applies not only to the crown, but to all authority in Israel—and it is necessary to add that a judge or a *nasi* must be an Israelite. . . ." To solve this problem, recourse is had to the principle that a stranger may judge one of his own group, and therefore it is

[2] The Declaration of Independence of Israel contains the assurance that the State "will uphold the full social and political equality of all its citizens without distinction of race, creed or sex" and "will guarantee full freedom of conscience, worship, education and culture."

legitimate to appoint a non-Jewish judge. "In the Jewish state, judges will be appointed on the basis of minority rights, according to which each community is recognized as an entity in itself, possessing the right to demand a part in all branches of government so that it can serve its members. Therefore, the prohibition against the appointment of non-Jewish judges does not apply here. . . ."

Other Approaches

Examples of this kind abound, but there is no need to belabor the point. The Orthodox approach finds it unnecessary to seek "amendments or reforms in law or Torah, but only to strive for a faithful conformity of our new life to the bases of Torah. Our constitution and law must also be entirely in accord with the spirit of Torah—and in this task our rabbis are engaged." In this summary of the Orthodox position, Rabbi Techoresh repeats two refrains recurrent in all Orthodox presentations. One is that life must be adapted to Torah, while the second is that the rabbis must be the final authority in matters of legislation.

Another approach to the problem is that of A. Littai, in two articles which appeared in *Haaretz*. He believes that through proper use of interpretation and legal fiction, it will be possible to bring traditional law into accord with the demands of the hour. Littai's realism is in sharp contrast with the attachment of the writers mentioned above to the absolute authority of the Torah. Littai, too, wants to base the new state on Jewish law, but he recognizes that profound changes will have to be made in order to render that law applicable to life in modern Eretz Yisrael. His emphasis, therefore, is on the need for change, rather than the necessity of preserving tradition.

In order to fortify his argument, Littai brings as evidence the attitude of Orthodox *halutzim*. In one of the *Hapoel Hamizrachi* publications, we find the following: "We have not yet arrived at a direct approach to the *mitzvot* which would be conditioned by the new reality of Eretz Yisrael rebuilt and by the advanced social life in the *kevutzah*. The formulation of the *Shulhan Arukh*, which was made to fit the realities of the *galut*, greatly influences our attitude toward certain *mitzvot*. If we want to be freed from the reality of *galut*—then we cannot permit any estrangement to exist between ourselves and the formulation of the *Shulhan Arukh*." Littai quotes this opinion in contrast to that of Rabbi Techoresh, who declares that the *Shulhan Arukh* stands above time and place. Littai finds little hope in the ability of the Palestinian rabbinate to provide the leadership required to bridge the gap between past and present in Jewish law.

M. Silberg, writing in *B'terem*, calls for a secular code of law for Eretz Yisrael which will be based on the fundamental principles of Hebrew law. As he puts it, the task of the Yishuv is "to pour out the sour wine and to preserve the barrel, in order to fill it with new wine. The new wine will be scented by the old which has been absorbed into the staves of the barrel—and may the scent and taste be as good as those of the old. This is the problem of historical perspective and sense of reality, the obligation to both tradition and to life. . . ." How this is to be accomplished Silberg makes no effort to describe, being satisfied with presenting the problem and declaring that it will take a generation to solve.

Judaism Not to Be Equated with Statehood

In all of these articles, it is apparent that the writers assume that, although certain rights will have to be granted to

the non-Jewish population of Eretz Yisrael, the character of the land as a whole will bear the stamp of the Jewish people. I see no reason to dispute this view, for this is, after all, the fundamental purpose of Zionism. Nevertheless, too many members of the Yishuv fail to see that a new world has been born, in which the *ger* not only has his rights, but must also be looked upon as a partner in the creation of a society. It seems to me that the awareness of this fact would do much to dispel many of the obfuscations that becloud the problem of law in the Jewish state. As I suggested in my last letter, it is time that the Yishuv began to realize that democracy calls for a law to be worked out by the common consent of the entire citizenry. The fact that there is a Jewish majority in the land will protect the *Jewish* character of the law to be evolved, but we cannot now turn to the Arabs and tell them that they may become citizens in a state which will be ruled by decisions resulting from an adjustment of Jewish traditional law. The Arabs cannot be treated as new immigrants who must pledge allegiance to the law of the adopted land. They have a claim to a share in developing the law. Jews have a perfect right to look to their own law for a valuable basis for the code of the new state and they should do so. But they have no right to declare that these laws must be accepted for the state simply because they are *Jewish*.

The Yishuv should learn that Judaism is not to be equated with the Jewish state, although it will be profoundly affected by it. Jews who enjoy a majority status must not make the error, fatal to the unity of the Jewish people, that the civil law of Eretz Yisrael and the principles that are to guide the future relations of Jews to one another are at all points the same. By recognizing the demands which true democracy makes upon a majority, the Yishuv would be prepared to organize itself on two levels. One would be the level of statehood, in which the law of the land would be worked out and implemented by all citizens, Jewish and non-Jewish. The second would be the level of Jewish peoplehood, which the Yishuv would share with the diaspora. On this second level, the Yishuv could organize its spiritual and cultural life. It is on this level, incidentally, that the two extremes of Orthodoxy and secularism will have to come to some agreement as to what should be a concern of civic discipline and what is to remain a matter of personal choice. Eventually the Orthodox will have to accept the inevitable—the separation of ritual practice from civil law, while the secularists will have to agree to some standards of civic religion.

To illustrate these two levels, let us take as an instance the observance of Jewish holy days. No one assumes that the Arab citizen of the Jewish state will be expected to observe Shabbat. That is a private Jewish affair. But the Arabs could be expected to observe Constitution Day in the new state, providing they have a voice in planning the Constitution and ratifying it. Conceivably, *Shabbat* could be voted by the Jewish majority as a day of national rest, but it would be far wiser to leave the matter of rest days and holidays to the discretion of each community, constitutional provision being made that no citizen will be penalized for the observance of any occasion sacred to his group. It then devolves upon the Jews and Arabs to organize their inner community life as they see fit. It is on this level that the Jewries of all nations will continue to have contact with one another.

In all of these matters the experience of American Jewry can be of value to the Yishuv.

Theatre Notes

HABIMAH ON BROADWAY

FOR four weeks, the pioneer Hebrew theatrical company of Israel has been entertaining audiences on Broadway. The American repertory consists of four plays that deserve to rate as dramatic classics: *The Dybbuk* by S. Ansky, *David's Crown* by the 17th century Spanish poet, Calderon de La Barca, *The Golem* by Lavik, and *Oedipus Rex* by Sophocles.

The Plays

Characteristically, all the plays, including the one that is not Jewish in content, are profoundly religious. The action of the plots, in each instance, transcends the mere personal relationships of the characters and is envisaged as part of a cosmic drama. The mood of each is predominantly tragic, although, according to the technical definition of tragedy, the *Golem* would perhaps not be classified as such. In all of the plays, however, the protagonists experience the conflict so eloquently expressed in the Rabbinic exclamation, *"Oi li miyitzri, oi li miyotzeri,"* "Woe is me because of my human nature! Woe is me because of my Maker!"; in all of them some sin, some evidence of human inadequacy to meet the demands of the divine, creates a tragic situation and assumes a universal symbolic significance.

In *The Dyybuk,* for example, Sender's desire for enhancing the wealth of his household leads him to ignore the covenant made with his friend that, if the one should beget a son and the other a daughter, the two should be married. The breach of this covenant leads to the death of the poverty stricken lover, who, thwarted in his hope to win his bride by legitimate means, resorts to Kabbalistic magic which involves his possessing her body as a *dybbuk,* a ghost that seeks reincarnation in the body of a living person. As a *dybbuk,* he succeeds in preventing the marriage of Leah, Sender's daughter to Menashe, and her unhappy father who seeks the exorcism of the *dybbuk* is confronted with his breach of faith and made to do penance for it. Finally, the exorcism of the *dybbuk* is achieved, but only at the cost of Leah's life, for her spirit is reluctant to part from her lover. The play concludes with the words of the "messenger," ostensibly a courier between different Jewish communities, but actually a messenger from the heavenly regions, who pronounces the traditional *berakah*: *"Barukh dayyan emet,"* "Blessed is the true Judge." In their context in the play, these words are more than a mere expression of pious resignation to the will of God; they are an affirmation that the wrong done by the breach of the covenant of the two friends has been redressed and that the divine will, which desired the union of the two lovers, has been accomplished, though not as anticipated.

In *David's Crown,* the tragic theme is the vanity of the lust for power symbolized by the crown. At the beginning of the play, David is at the height of his career. Having returned successfully from the wars with the enemy, he would like to enjoy in the bosom of his family the peace and honor he had won. But his passionate nature, which was largely responsible for his rise to power, is inherited by his sons, who, however, lack the sense of consecration to a divine task that inspired David's career. They thus engage in passionate feuds with one another, leading to the tragic deaths of Amnon and Absalom. David, who loved all his

children and who would have liked to rule as a benevolent and beloved patriarch, finds himself completely frustrated by the very achievement of his will to power. Completely broken by the death of Absalom, he renounces the crown as the source of all his woes. But in the final tableau Solomon and Adonijah are discovered each stretching out his hand to the crown that David abandoned.

The theme of *The Golem* is the tragic consequence of Maharal's effort to rescue his people at the time of a blood accusation by ways that did not have divine approval. A prologue in heaven sets the cosmic stage, as it were, for the action that is to follow. We see the Messiah chained to the rock and struggling with his chains in his yearning to come and redeem Israel. The prophet Elijah is standing by and tells him in God's name that he may go down to earth provided he do no violence. In the meantime, by the use of mystic formulae, Maharal has created a clay image of colossal size, the *golem,* and has brought it to life. He sends the image on a mission to protect Jews who had sought refuge in a tower and to slay their pursuers. Elijah and the Messiah, in the guise of wanderers, ask to spend the night with the refugees in the tower, but Maharal, recognizing them, refuses them admission for fear they would hamper his plan, and they depart. His plan succeeds, but after the *golem* has fulfilled his task by killing the inquisitor and his guards, the monster develops a lust for combat and chafes at the restraints which Maharal would impose on his behavior. In Maharal's brief absence in the synagogue, the *golem* goes berserk and starts killing Jews. Maharal in despair and remorse, blows out the Sabbath candles and is about to accompany the *golem* into a voluntary exile far away from Jewish habitations. But at that moment, his granddaughter enters and the *golem,* who has conceived a passion for her, seizes her and kisses her. Horror-stricken, Maharal asserts once more his mastery over the *golem* and reduces him again to clay. An interesting device is used to intimate that the Maharal's sin has been atoned. Before he discovers the crimes committed by the *golem,* there is heard off stage the singing of *Hashkivenu* in the Sabbath evening service of the congregation. The singing fades out when Maharal resolves to renounce his ties with the Jewish community and blows out the Sabbath candle, declaring *"En Shabbat,"* (There is no Sabbath). But after he has reduced the *golem* to clay, the singing is resumed where it left off, as though the intermediate action had not taken place and the Sabbath had never been violated.

The story of *Oedipus Rex* is the well-known Greek legend of the King of Thebes who was fated to slay his father and marry his mother. Oedipus at the beginning of the play is entirely unaware that the man whom he slew was his father or the woman to whom he was wed, his mother. But a pestilence that broke out in Thebes led to an inquiry into the reason that the gods were angry, and the oracle lays the guilt on the king himself. He tries to disprove his implication in the death of Laios his predecessor to the throne, but his efforts lead only to the revelation of his double sin of murder and incest. Jocasta, his wife and mother, commits suicide and he blinds himself and exiles himself to Mount Kithairon, where as an infant he had been exposed to death because of the prophecy that he would slay his father and commit incest with his mother.

Incidentally, the choice of plays by Habimah illustrates the difference in spirit between the Jewish and the Hellenic religious attitudes. Both express a horror for sin as a disturbance of the cosmic or-

der.But in the Jewish plays, the sins that cry for redress are committed by men as an abuse of human freedom; they are not themselves part of a doom decreed by fate and inescapable. Moreover, there is in all of the Jewish plays the feeling that the suffering entailed by the sin is also penance and absolution, a divine discipline to turn man to humble obedience to God. They do not represent man, in the manner of the Greek tragedy, as trapped and hounded by cosmic powers that are essentially arbitrary and amoral.

Critical Reaction

Was the choice of plays by Habimah a wise one? There can be no denying that the plays are all of them great works of dramatic art, having universal significance. But on audiences that were not only ignorant of the language in which they were performed but, in great measure, of the background of the plot, much of the symbolism was probably lost. This is apparent from some of the critical comments on the performances. Thus one review spoke of *The Dybbuk* as a "witch drama." *The Dybbuk* is no more a witch drama than Rabbi Azrael, who exorcises the *dybbuk,* was a wizard. Nobody familiar with the Hasidic movement in Jewish life would have so characterized it. The characterization completely misses the ethical and spiritual aspect of Jewish mysticism.

Similarly, the acting in *David's Crown* was subject to criticism that betrayed, to my mind, a lack of understanding by the critics, of the Biblical background of de La Barca's play. One critic complained that the actors gave exaggerated expression to their emotions, that they overplayed their parts. I cannot agree with that judgment. It seems to me to stem from a prejudice based on the conventions of the modern realistic school of acting and the Anglo-Saxon aversion to display of emotion. But the Biblical characters—and the play keeps very close to the Bible in its characterizations—were not Anglo-Saxons. Nor had they much in common with the emotionally inhibited sophisticates of an Ibsen or a Shaw play. They were boisterous, violent and uninhibited in their behavior, like the Homeric heroes or the Renaissance characters of Shakespeare's plays. And that is how the Habimah cast represented them.

The Golem suggested to the critics the obvious analogy with the Frankenstein legend, but their comments, although in the main laudatory (*The Golem* seems to have gotten across better than any of the other plays because of its fast-moving plot and interesting action), still seemed to indicate that they missed the point. None of the critics stressed the distinctively Jewish use made of the Frankenstein theme. In *The Golem,* the man-made monster is symbolic of the naive barbaric violence so often directed against the Jews, and the plot points up the danger of Jews' yielding to the temptation to employ such violence to effect their own redemption from their foes. (One wonders, incidentally, how some of the extremists of the Irgun and Stern group reacted in Eretz Yisrael to the religious pacifism of this play.)

As for *Oedipus Rex,* there was of course, no difficulty of interpretation to those who were familiar with the Greek classic from the original or the English version of it. But here, more than in any of the other plays, the language barrier created a bar to its full appreciation. Even many in the audience who had some familiarity with Hebrew found it difficult to follow the poetic language of the speeches.

We hope that, in its next visit to this country (may it be soon) Habimah will produce some plays dealing with contemporary life, the situations of which would

be sufficiently familiar not to involve the same difficulties of interpretation encountered by this season's repertoire.

The Acting

The acting in all of the plays was skillful. The actors identified themselves so completely with the characters they represented, were so free of tell-tale mannerisms, that it was almost impossible to recognize the same actor in the different roles that he played. The character of the plays was such that many of the roles offered a severe test of acting ability. Thus, the least bit of exaggeration in the ungainly gestures or the facial expression of the *golem* could easily have made him a grotesquely comical figure, but Aaron Meskin in that role, succeeded to perfection in making the audience sympathize with the frustrations of the untutored brute under the restraints demanded by a civilized moral order.

In *The Dybbuk,* where the heroine has to speak sometimes with the voice of Leah and sometimes with the masculine voice of Hanan, whose soul posssessed her body as a *dybbuk,* the audience, even those who could not understand the words, were never at a loss to know whether the actress was speaking in the one role or in the other. That, in itself, would perhaps not be so great a feat, but what commanded admiration was that, in either voice, the actress who played the part, succeeded in expressing with perfect naturalness the emotion that the part called for. (When I saw the play, the part of Leah was taken by Ianna Gorinska. On other days it was sometimes played by Hanna Rovina, and played, apparently, with equal success.)

David's Crown had to overcome the difficulties presented by every Biblical play. Not only is everybody who knows his Bible familiar in advance with the story, but each has his own interpretation of the characters and action and, because of the sacred associations of the story, is likely to resent any departure from his notion of the motives and behavior of the characters. To give reality to the characters and interpret them as the playwright conceived them and, at the same time, to preserve the solemnity of the Biblical theme calls for unusually good acting, and the Habimah players proved equal to the task.

Perhaps the severest test of all was provided by *Oedipus Rex.* In the classic Greek drama little action takes place on the stage; the main action of the plot is narrated by some of the characters or by the chorus and there is no more attempt at realism in the dialogue than there is in most operas. The classic Greek drama was an outgrowth of religious liturgy and had not yet emancipated itself as a fully independent art, with a technique wholly its own. But the dynamic quality of the Habimah acting overcame all these difficulties. The expressive postures and gestures of the actors and the marvelous modulations of their voices created the emotional excitement which one would imagine no actors could produce while adhering to such a script. Not merely was the acting masterful but so also was the direction. The chorus kept grouping and regrouping itself in accordance with the changing situation, and the stage picture presented by any one of its many tableaus was one of classic beauty, while the movements themselves were not the less graceful and rhythmic for being also profoundly expressive of the emotion that the situation called for.

Such action and direction is evidence of the artistic integrity and intellectual insight of the cast. I feel that, with a single exception, the authors of the dramas, if they could have witnessed the performance of their plays, would have

been more than satisfied that the actors had given a thoroughly adequate interpretation of the artistic intention of the playwright. That exception was the second act of *The Dybbuk,* the scene in which the celebration of Leah's marriage to Menashe is begun, only to be interrupted by the *dybbuk*'s entering into the body of Leah and her consequent refusal to go on with the wedding. In this act, it was my feeling that the dramatic was somewhat sacrificed to the merely theatrical. The dance of the beggars was "good theatre," but, as presented by Habimah, it was merely used to provide local color and was not closely integrated into the plot, as it was in the familiar cinema version of *The Dybbuk.* There Leah dances with the beggars, and, although she starts out dancing mechanically and perfunctorily because her heart is not in the wedding, she ends up dancing like one possessed and the audience senses that, in the course of the dance, she actually *became posssessed,* that she was really dancing with her dead lover who had entered into her body as a *dybbuk.* In the stage play, the first intimation of Leah's being possessed by the *dybbuk* comes when she spurns her bridegroom under the *huppah.* The interpretation of the role of Menashe was also, to my mind, unsatisfactory. His awkwardness seemed to have been purposely exaggerated to provide comic relief. That I regard as an unwarranted disturbance of the solemn mystic mood of the drama as a whole. It seemed to me that the author's intent was not to make Menashe ludicrous, but merely to make him a foil to Hanan. In contrast with the spiritual audacity of Hanan who was ready to stake his life in this world and the next on winning his love, Menashe is the docile timid, inhibited *yeshivah bahur,* who looks with dread upon his approaching marriage because of the fear of sex bred in him by his ascetic religious training. He should have been presented in a more sympathetic and less ludicrous light. Because of these defects the play, although it got off to a good start in the first act, did not sufficiently build up its emotional mood to prepare the audience for the final third act. In itself, however, that last act was superb and went far to redeem the defects of the second. The acting of David Vardi as Rabbi Azrael, Shimon Finkel as Sender and of Ianna Govinska as Leah (I did not see Hanna Rovina in that role) produced scenes that the mind's eye of every sensitive person in the audience will retain for years.

A significant aspect of the artistry of the Habimah players is the care that is lavished on the minor roles. In every one of the plays, among the exciting moments which linger in the memory of the audience after the performance, are some in which a minor character occupies the center of the stage. In *The Dybbuk,* for example, the prayer of the poor widow (Tamar Robins) for her sick child before the open ark of the synagogue in the first act is not easily forgotten, nor is the acting of the messenger, played by Joshua Bertonov, who, although he takes no ostensible part in the action of the plot and speaks only a few laconic sentences, makes himself felt as the occult mystic cause of the whole action. In *David's Crown,* the Ethiopean sorceress (played by Shoshana Duer) who appears on the stage for only a few minutes in the first act, in which she curses David, his household and his court, puts a passion into her utterance and gives a convincing plausibility to her predictions, that lifts her role above that of the conventional foreteller of disaster. Similarly in *The Golem,* there is the acting of the village idiot (Zvi Ben-Haim) and, in *Oedipus Rex* of the blind prophet Tiresias (Haim

Amitai). And these are only a few instances of many.

This characteristic of Habimah's artistry arises from the very nature of its organization. The Habimah players are a cooperative group. They all participate in all important decisions of the group and share equally in its economic returns. The competitive featuring of stars is discountenanced, with the excellent aristic result that the private personality of the actor is kept in the background and the artistic integrity of the production in the foreground. The leading actor in one play does not disdain taking a subordinate part in another. The actors thus develop a remarkable versatility. Aaron Meskin, for example, plays roles as different from one another as those of one of the beggars in *The Dybbuk,* King David in *David's Crown,* the *golem* in the play of that name and Kreon, the Theban aristocrat, in *Oedipus Rex.* By applying the characteristic ethical values of the Yishuv — the spirit of cooperation and dedicated labor—Habimah has produced the highest aesthetic values. One likes to believe that that will be characteristic of the new art of the Yishuv as a whole.

EUGENE KOHN

Book Notes

THE RELIGIOUS ESSAYS OF LEO BAECK

THE PHARISEES AND OTHER ESSAYS, by Leo Baeck. Schocken Books, New York, 1947, 164 *pp.* $3.00

IT is not overly difficult to find the thread that runs through these studies of Jewish thought and history. For all their diversity of theme, they are written out of a consistent, philosophic approach to Judaism and its place in the world. Dr. Baeck's position, as it emerges from these essays, may be briefly stated as follows. No amount of comparative study can possibly bridge the gap between the Jewish religion and the pagan religions among which it came into being. The evolutionary hypothesis will not suffice to explain the unique character of the Jewish religion. Judaism represented a revolution of the human spirit and introduced into society a new, distinctive world view.

In its essence, this view is the comprehension of the world in all its variety as the manifestation of the One, the Supreme Unity which is the source of all value and all meaning. Once having apprehended that Unity, man is in an unending state of tension, the tension between what is and what, in the ligh of his awareness of God, ought to be. Hence, the commandments that lay upon man the task of bringing all life under the sway of the Eternal. "Even in the world to come, the righteous will know no rest." Dynamism is the authentic, characteristic mode of Judaism. "Its rational draws its strength from the irrational. Therefore, it can never be refuted, — one can only live opposed to it. . . . Its fecundity evokes and begets the new again and again." This world view constitutes one of the two main streams of Western culture, streams that can never form a confluence. It determined the history of the Jew even as it made inevitable a protracted struggle within the Church as the latter body alternated between the Jewish and the Greek world view. The value of Judaism resides in this unique ap-

proach, which is both philosophically and ethically superior and must ultimately, even if in some other guise, win out. In the meantime, to borrow Zangwill's sentence, "The Jew's only value to the world, his only justification for persistence, is his spiritual originality and not his repetition of borrowed formulae."

Each of these essays butresses one or another aspect of this general position. The title essay traces the origin and growth of Pharisaism, the development of its characteristic ideas and institutions amid the shifting tides of history. Through it all, the author sees a consistent purpose: "a great attempt to achieve the full domination of religion over life, both over the life of the individual and the life of the collectivity. . . . It (Pharisaism) took the ideal of saintliness in earnest, it responded in deadly earnest to the summons to make life, including daily life, conform to the ideal."

The coming of Pauline Christianity marked the beginning of a struggle, not yet ended, over the position of the Jewish element within the Church. The Jewish idea of the pre-eminence of works over faith could now be driven from the Church, now compromised with, now submerged but always it reasserted itself; for what remains of a Christianity cut off from its Jewish roots? And thus, with an amplitude of learning, Dr. Baeck traces out the history of that struggle in an essay on "Judaism in the Church." Even in so universal a phenomenon as mysticism the Jewish approach remains inalienable and readily distinguishable. The ultimate aim of mysticism is the absorption of the individual in the All, the *unio mystica.* The mystical path demands a negation of the will and a release from the bonds of earth. Herein lies the distinguishable feature of Jewish mysticism, which for all the parallels it offers to the general phenomenon does not negate the man of this earth. It merely extends the field of ethical action from this world to the cosmic realm. Access to cosmic power is held forth, but its path is not the absorption of the self into the Infinite but rather the moral deed. One may add, that, where this pattern was disregarded, as it was in Sabbatianism, a formal break with Judaism became inevitable.

In an essay on Greek and Jewish Preaching, the author contrasts the two, examines their points of contact and conflict and gives a number of illustrations of how Jewish preaching met the challenge of Greek thought. But for Dr. Baeck, history remains the tool wherewith to cope more adequately with the present task. On the nature of that task, he speaks with warmth and elevation. The penultimate essay, "Two World Views Compared," is a masterly intellectual achievement and could come only from one who, like the author, combines the power of sweeping generalization with a thorough understanding of the two cultures. Unencumbered by excessive detail of specific reference and yet avoiding a fog of vague abstractions, it epitomizes the two world views. The Greeks lived in a spiritual world in which the ultimates were fixed and final. The highest modes of expression were either contemplation as in Plato or rapture as in the mystery religions; "ultimate visions or ultimate emotions." The Jew lived in a world in which the highest mode of expression is the unending struggle to encompass the Infinite within life. To state the proposition so barely is to fail to convey the fulness of thought and the stylistic richness with which the author elaborates this key concept.

We have, we believe, transcribed enough of Dr. Baeck's thinking to enable the reader to sense what Judaism means to one of the rare Jewish spirits of our day.

It was inevitable that the reading of this volume should provoke the question once raised by Bialik: *"Im Yesh Et Nafshekha Ladaat,"* "If thou wouldst know whence our people drew its strength." In this instance, whence did Dr. Baeck draw the strength to face his ordeal and come through unbroken in spirit and faith? In an oblique fashion, this book furnishes the answer. Only the man who experiences his commitment as a pledge given to the absolute values of life can look into the face of the ultimate horror and still go unswerved and unafraid. Somewhere, for all our relativistic thinking, there must be a holy of holies. For many of us, the old paths have been obstructed with impassable barriers. A new path must be found. Dr. Baeck has found his, and its signposts are luminous enough to inspire any Jew to the search.

"The Jewish view of life cannot be refuted. One can only live opposed to it." Before the life Dr. Leo Baeck has lived, intellectual refutation is dumb and bows its head in reverent humility. Any view of Judaism that can produce a life like Dr. Baeck's is beyond refutation.

THEODORE FRIEDMAN

BOOKS RECEIVED

HIGHER EDUCATION FOR AMERICAN DEMOCRACY, a report of the President's Commission on Higher Education, in six pamphlet volumes as follows: Volume I, "Establishing the Goals," ix + 103 pp., $.40; Volume II, "Equalizing and Expanding Individual Opportunity," viii + 69 pp., $.35; Volume III, "Organizing Higher Education," x + 75 pp., $.30; Volume IV, "Staffing Higher Education," x + 63 pp., $.25; Volume V, "Financing Higher Education," x + 68 pp., $.25; Volume VI, "Resource Data," 51 pp., $.50. The report is of special interest to Jews because of its condemnation of racial and religious discrimination. For sale by Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1947.

LOST BOUNDARIES, by Walter L. White, the true story of a family with Negro blood, who had passed for White until the head of the family tried to enlist in the U. S. Navy. 91 pp. Harcourt, Brace and Co., New York, 1947, $1.50.

THE LANGUAGE OF THE JEWS IN THE FOUR COMMUNITIES OF COMTAT VENAISSIN, by Z. Szajkowski, with a pre face by Max Weinreich, (Yiddish pamphlet) the result of research into the language spoken by Jews in the Middle Ages in the part of France indicated in the title. Shows how Jews tended to blend Hebraic elements with those of vernaculars to form new Jewish languages like Yiddish and Ladino. xi + 78 pp. Published by the author with the aid of the Yiddish Scientific Institute-YIVO, 1948.

Random Thoughts

A mother we know told us of her experiences wtih her seven-year-old youngster.

She learned from her reading on child psychology enough to inform junior that he should stop worrying about his nightmares, because all children go through different stages with their nightmare experiences.

First comes the wolf stage, then the fire stage, then the robber stage.

To convince him she read to him from the book where she had gotten her information.

For a while junior's mind seemed at ease. But before long his old fears returned.

On questioning him the mother learned that he had looked up the psychology book from whch she had read to him only to learn that in his eighth year he would have a new kind of nightmare.

The worry about what he was to ex-

pect in his next year kept him awake nights.

When we heard that story we thought we were listening to a parable of what the whole world was living through these days—wondering what the next nightmare would be like.

* * *

The demagogue compounds the fears and the baser passions of people.

The selfless leader compounds their hopes and generous impulses.

* * *

An ambassador is only such as long as he represents the government of his country.

Man is man only as long as he properly represents the Divine Government of the world.

* * *

Formerly human life was like rowing a boat on a river within sight of land on the other side.

Nowadays it is like hanging on to a raft amid ocean waves after our ship has sunk.

* * *

Accuracy of vision is useless, unless we have the right point of view.

Accuracy of reasoning is worthless, unless we start with the correct premises.

* * *

The trouble with theologians is that they presume to make up God's mind for Him.

The trouble with the secularists is that they assume that God waits for the theologians to make up His mind for Him.

* * *

The philosophers formerly were wont to prove man's superiority to the animals by means of a curious argument.

"Oxen have horns," says Joseph Albo, repeating Aristotle, "boars have tusks, porcupines have quills and turtles have to carry their shells.

"Not having these weapons and arms, a human being is spared carrying a heavy burden with him all the time."

Now, however, that man has to wage global war and has armies and navies, he has worked himself down to the animal, and like it "carries a heavy burden with him all the time."

* * *

The first prerequisite to the art of living is the ability to budget one's needs and responsibilities in terms of time and money.

* * *

The traditional warning against divulging the deeper meanings of Scriptures to those who are not adequately equipped should have been accompanied by a warning against the danger of having only a few adequately equipped.

* * *

There is nothing as irrefutable as absolute ignorance.

* * *

Scientific method has nothing to contribute either to wisdom or to morale.

Whatever humility and devotion to truth scientists display are but part of wisdom.

Whatever courage and patience they display in carrying out their experiments are but part of morale.

* * *

Our forebears would not sit down to a meal without the ritual of washing their hands.

Our contemporaries will not sit down to dinner without strictly observing the ritual of washing their throats.

* * *

We need peace of mind as we need sleep—no less and no more than sleep.

* * *

We Jews are evolving into a new type of human society — a people, which, though scattered, is rendered one and in-

divisible through its national nucleus in the land of its birth.

We are experimenting with a hitherto untried means of cohesion — the love elicited by a common tradition and a common fate.

It takes the threat of gun-fire to keep a nation together.

It takes the threat of hell-fire to keep a church together.

We want to prove that love born of a common history and a common destiny can keep a people together.

That is the basic significance of the United Jewish Appeal.

* * *

When we set forth in search of truth, we should be warned against being diverted by the quest for absolute certainty as a traveler in the desert is warned against being misled by mirages.

* * *

To understand God is defined by Jeremiah, not as being able to account for the evil of sin and suffering, but as realizing that God deals in kindness and righteousness.

* * *

The three indivisibles which revenge themselves on man when he tries to divide them are God, humanity, and one's personality.

M. M. K.

Correspondence

Thoughts on Mr. Goldstein of "Jewish Middletown"

Sirs:

Ben Zevi David's story, "It Happens Every Day in Jewish Middletown," serves as a brilliant and humorous cathartic for the host of grievances stored up inside the many Jews who find themselves professionally engaged in synagogue work. The story, however, has many implications which cannot be taken so lightly. That "Mr. Goldstein" is representative of the caliber of man who too often becomes the pillar of the congregation cannot be denied. But the effect of the "Mr. Goldsteins" in conditioning the tone of synagogue life, and ultimately the tone of Jewish life, is a matter which calls for closer and less frivolous examination.

Our rabbinate and Jewish lay leaders live their lives and do their work within a particular social environment. The methods and systems of thought which surround their means of earning a livelihood determine, to a large extent, their attitudes, community outlook, and system of values. The *stimmung* or tone of the congregation is set in accordance with the unstated assumptions of Jewish-American life. The primary premise of success in American life is that of adhering to the ubiquitous social-upward trend. The intensive competitiveness of American life puts its greatest social rewards into the hands of those who find their "success" measured by business acumen and the concomitant accumulation of large surpluses of money. The business man is the ideal-type. The accumulation of wealth is the yardstick which measures success.

Rabbis and lay leaders who are interested in being considered successful, too often use the methods of gaining success which are endemic to American culture. As a result, our admiration goes to the leaders who conduct "successful congregations." Prosperous "pulpiteering," large (although inactive) memberships, and skill in raising funds for one drive or another are the touchstones of achievement. Our rabbis no longer have to be teachers. They no longer have to study or write books. They can be successful only in terms of the amount of money that they raise for one cause or another. Even among their colleagues, the most highly respected are often those who have not written, or studied, or taught, but who have been successful as money-winners.

This attitude establishes a tone of Jewish life which atrophies the progressive development of wholesome Jewish civilization. Undoubtedly the monies are highly essential. Our grievance, however, stems from the fact that this becomes a primary goal and the synagogue, under these circumstances, tends to become little more than a fraternal lodge, where persons meet for social activities, and funds are solicited in an effort to keep the lodge and some activities in which the lodge holds an interest, in financial health. The spiritual and intellectual needs are neglected because the synagogue and its leaders already occupy highly respectable positions in the American community. Study and rigorous and scholarly analyses of Jewish ideas and current problems are replaced by membership drives and fund raising rallies. This is more and more becoming the tone of Jewish life, and because of its frivolity and emptiness will serve only to drive the Jew who is looking for positive values out of Jewish life altogether.

"A Synagogue Worker"